

NOTICIAS

Quarterly Magazine of the
SANTA BARBARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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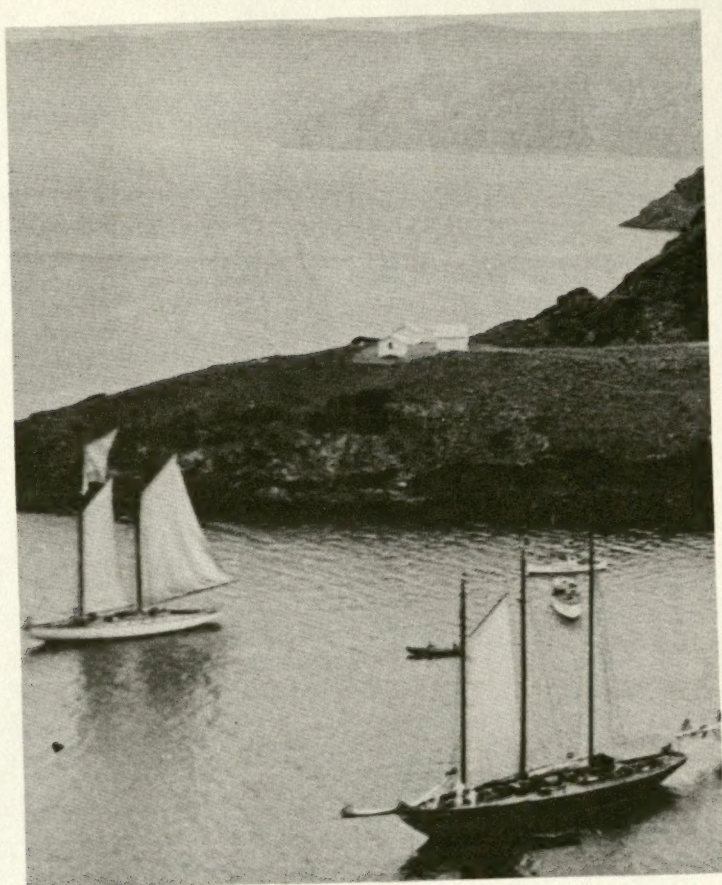
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE SANTA BARBARA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Islands
Remembered



They all came to Santa Cruz—the famous actor on holiday, the ailing sea captain—and they left memories in the minds of those who had been at the dinner table or heard the tales: John Barrymore remembered by Helen Caire, Captain Kimberly's adventures recalled by his wife, and a contribution from a former resident of Santa Cruz Island, the late Carey Stanton. Photos are from the collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society unless otherwise credited.

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John Barrymore's Visits to Santa Cruz Island

by Helen Caire

It all began with an interesting encounter. One August day in 1919, my father, Fred Caire, was in the vineyard in the vicinity of the chapel, inspecting the state of the young grape clusters, when a stranger approached through the chest-high vines.¹ The man was slim, of medium height, hatless; his hair, receding somewhat from a high forehead, was black, and very blue eyes seemed bluer in his slender, tanned face. The profile, finely chiseled, was classic and unmistakable.

John Barrymore introduced himself and my father greeted him cordially. Years later, on return trips to the island, Barrymore used to repeat the story of the encounter, marvelling at my father's hospitality. He would begin, "There I was in a khaki shirt, old sweater and trousers..." and would continue, making much of the meeting.

He explained that he was on vacation at Pelican Bay Camp with some friends from Montecito. (Since many persons

were interested in seeing the island, the Santa Cruz Island Company leased a cove on the Channel coast west of Prisoners' Harbor to Captain Ira Eaton. He transported sportsmen, movie companies and whatever holiday groups wished to cross the Channel in his *Sea Wolf*.)

My father and John Barrymore talked for a long while, standing among the glistening green vines, the actor occasionally running a hand through his hair, his nervous eyes betraying fatigue. He very gladly accepted my father's invitation to lunch.

After a long and successful run of *The Jest* (1919) in New York, he was extremely tired and needed a rest, he explained. He was a fascinating conversationalist; among other things, he discussed Sem Benelli and *La Cena delle Beffe*. The great

Helen Caire is a granddaughter of Justinian Caire, the major stockholder in the Santa Cruz Island Company from 1880 until his death in 1897. She has previously written about the island for NOTICIAS.



Pelican Bay was a popular anchorage for yachtsmen. This 1922 view shows the dining hall of Eaton's camp in left background.

actor laughed, "I felt like a long string bean in those green tights." He mentioned that he was reading *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* and told my sister Jeanne that he would send it to her.

Because my father and Barrymore hit it off so well and he was such good company, he and his friends were invited for dinner a day or two later. Naturally, it was a dinner for grown-ups and not for little girls. Marie and Jeanne were to be present, but I was supposed to go on a picnic with my younger sisters and cousins. I can vividly recall how I begged my mother, teased and wheedled to let me attend, until she laughed and yielded.

The guests arrived around noon. The tour of the Main Ranch included the winery, of course, so we walked eastward along the road to the large building of red bricks, fired in island kilns in my grandfather's time. My father unlocked one of the huge double doors and we en-

tered. Since the rear of the winery was carved out of the hillside, within, it was cavernously cool, shadowy and echoing. As we walked around, dwarfed by the enormous casks, my father pointed out the oldest ones of aged oak and discussed island wines. Before leaving, the guests were, of course, treated to wine tasting, a vintage Riesling.

As to the dinner, Num outdid himself, except for the stuffed zucchini prepared by my mother. Barrymore gasped in delight at the

sight of them and rolled his large fatigue-nervous eyes in mock ecstatic pose.

"Ambrosia!" he murmured dramatically. "Too good to eat!"

"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly," my father laughed, lifting his fork in a gesture of mock menace at his plate.

"Let the assassination trammel up the consequence," was Barrymore's rejoinder as he happily speared the succulent zucchini, topped by fawn-colored, buttered breadcrumbs.

The actor was in the heyday of his brilliance and wit. My father enjoyed the theatre. He was a Shakespeare buff and knew reams of the plays by heart. If only tape recorders had been invented then, that dinner conversation, especially between my father and John Barrymore, would have been worth recording. It bounded as the lightest crystal ball; it sparkled like cut glass in candlelight; it had the excitement of a brandied dish

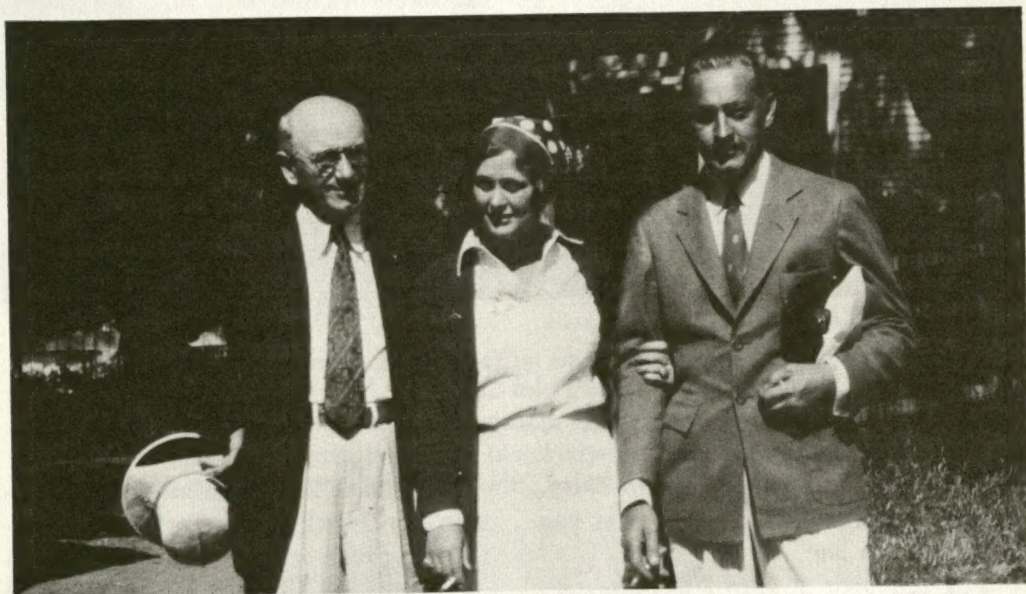
alight with aromatic flames. Remark and riposte flashed with lightning swiftness. No wonder a youngster, all eyes and ears, didn't know what she was eating!

Marie and I were scarcely noticed and had the sense to listen. But Jeanne, blonde and attractive, in her teens, allowed to wear her hair up for the first time, drew several remarks from the actor. He had

pronounced in his most mellifluous accent, is "...and with hummingbirds in my stomach."

When the guests left, John Barrymore was carrying a box of gently packed, stuffed zucchini in one hand and a bottle of Riesling in the other.

Barrymore's next visit, some years later, was with his wife, Dolores Costello,



Left to right: Joseph Cawthorne, Dolores Costello and John Barrymore on Santa Cruz Island. Cawthorne was Barrymore's manager, Costello his wife. Photo: Helen Caire.

brought the promised book, then very popular. He seemed somewhat concerned, "I don't know if the sisters at the convent would approve..." On the flyleaf, he had sketched the head of a bearded man with a somewhat sardonic expression—himself as a character in a play?—and inscribed it. He told us that his first ambition had been to be an artist.

As dinner drew to a close, Barrymore made a witty speech of appreciation and thanks. I wish I might remember it, but the only phrase that stuck in my mind,

sweet and pretty, who called him "Winky;" their baby, and a party of friends, all of whom sailed up on the Barrymores' yacht, *Infanta*. The actor's reaction to that visit was headlined in an article in the *Santa Barbara Morning Press*, June 10, 1930. Barrymore said that someday he would like to own an island kingdom like Santa Cruz and that he envied Fred Caire more than anyone else he knew. The paper quoted Barrymore as saying, "It is the greatest institution of its kind in the world, being so near Santa



Mr. and Mrs. Fred Caire indulge in the 1920's passion for Pee-Wee golf at the Main Ranch on Santa Cruz Island. Photo: Helen Caire.

Barbara, the supercivilized community. The supercivilized may be taken as you will."

The last visit of John Barrymore occurred years later. We were aboard the yacht of friends in Pelican Bay where the *Infanta* was also anchored. Hearing that some of the Caires were aboard, he came over for a visit. Time had added some weight to the slim, brilliant actor of his first arrival and gray lightly threaded his once coal-black hair. When he recounted again his first meeting with my father, he sported the dapper blue jacket, white trousers and visored cap of the yachtsman. With him were his sister, Ethel Barrymore, and her son, Sam Colt. We invited them up to the Main Ranch for a visit the next afternoon.

Right: The creekbed road up the Cañada del Puerto on Santa Cruz.

The island lay serene on a balmy summer day. Ethel Barrymore was not feeling very well at the time, so the ride up the Cañada del Puerto on the creekbed road was rather hard on her. Though she was interested in everything about the place, she was not up to walking around the Main Ranch.

We sat under the pine and brought her



Castilian roses. She loved the pretty pink flowers with their golden hearts and sweet fragrance, which could fill the large living room in a few hours.

John Barrymore was eager to play a round of Pee-Wee golf on the course we had rigged up nearby in the enclosure. The game was all the rage at the time and the visitors were surprised to see its layout on the Island. The great actress stands out in my memory as a gracious person with a delightful, deep chuckle and a nice, low voice. The summer afternoon waned pleasantly with talk and refreshments.

When we drove back to Prisoners' Harbor, the pines behind the beach were casting long shadows toward the shore where low waves lapped almost soundlessly.²

Editor's Notes

1. Among the many buildings erected under Justinian Caire's direction were a chapel and wineries. A variety of wines was produced and the business was carried on by Caire's sons. Prohibition stopped the production of wine, although grapes continued to be sold for a time.

2. These visits to Santa Cruz Island were not Barrymore's first to the Santa Barbara area. In 1916, Barrymore appeared in James Barrie's play, *Pantaloone*, at the Santa Barbara Country Club.

Below: The Main Ranch on Santa Cruz Island. Note vineyards in the foreground. Wine making facilities were maintained on the island for many years with an aging area for wine in oak casks dug partially into a hillside.





Above: Mrs. Kimberly, at left, during one of her tenures at the Hot Springs in Montecito during the late 1800's. Her daughter Jennie is next to her. Opposite page, top left is Jane Merritt Kimberly at the age of seventeen. Mid-page, as a young woman. Bottom right shows her late in life in front of her Kimberly Apartments at 104 Chapala Street. Here she died, aged 96, in 1936.



50 Years and More in Santa Barbara

by Jane Merritt Kimberly
as told to
Michael J. Phillips

From 1921 to 1924, Michael Phillips did a series of interviews with Santa Barbara "oldtimers" for the *Santa Barbara Daily News*. Jane Kimberly came to California as a young woman in the early 1860's, married Captain Martin Morse Kimberly and came to Santa Barbara in 1866. Following is her account of her husband's various enterprises on the Channel Islands and of their life in Santa Barbara. This article appeared on July 22, 1922.

My father, P. G. Merritt, had the distinction of editing the first Republican paper published in California. It was called *The Republican*, and ardently supported by Horace Greeley. My father admired that great editor sincerely and did all he could to further Greeley's cause. The early copies of the paper are on file in the state archives at Sacramento. Father came from

Connecticut in 1855 and located in San Francisco, at that time being about 45 years of age. He bought out a printing establishment and published six papers, retaining the editorship of *The Republican*. He was a member of the Vigilantes and took a prominent part in other civic affairs.¹

Mother came west in 1860 to join him, bringing myself, my brother and sister. The girl who afterwards became Col. Hollister's wife, a Miss James, was on the same steamer. We crossed the

Isthmus of Panama on the railroad and finished the journey by steamer from the west side.

I lived in San Francisco six years, then was married to Captain Martin M. Kimberly and came to Santa Barbara to reside.

My husband had located in this city 12 years earlier. He was also from the East and when he crossed the Isthmus in 1851 or '52, he had to make the journey on muleback, because the railroad had not been built.

He was a seafaring man in San Francisco, when his health became impaired and he began to have hemorrhages. The doctors who attended him, told him that he would live six months if he stayed there and might possibly live a year if he came to Southern California. The hemorrhages were caused by his diving to release his anchor, which was fouled in



San Francisco Bay. He swallowed sea water which was poisoned by copper from the anchor and this affected his lungs.

Captain Kimberly naturally decided to come to Southern California. Accompanied by an old English sailor as nurse, he journeyed to Santa Barbara. It was the general belief here in those days, 1854, that Santa Cruz Island was owned by the government and that anyone, consequently, might live on it and take up land.²

He wanted to live in the open, and the wild and primitive conditions on Santa Cruz appealed to him. So he and the sailor went over there and established a home for themselves. They stayed for three years.

The sailor declared that he could restore my husband to health. He found an old gunny sack in which there had been salt, and with this he rubbed my husband down vigorously every day. The hemorrhages ceased before long, and Captain Kimberly began gaining health and strength. He was six feet two and a half inches tall and weighed, when his health was restored, 225 pounds. He was very quick for his size and weight and also strong and fearless.

One of his lungs had entirely wasted away under the attack of tuberculosis, but the other healed up, and the lack could not be detected. There were few more vigorous outdoorsmen in this district.

Much gold dust

A dramatic occurrence of their stay on Santa Cruz was the wrecking of the steamer *Winfield Scott* in 1855 or '56, on Anacapa Island. She was a large vessel, en route from San Francisco to Panama, with many returning gold seekers aboard and much gold dust.³

When the vessel went on the rocks, she was abandoned. They took only the



Seaman, rancher, store owner, otter hunter: Captain Martin Morse Kimberly, who perished in the seas off Japan in his last otter hunting expedition.

gold dust with them in the open boats, abandoning everything else.

Really, what followed is a sort of *Swiss Family Robinson* story. Captain Kimberly and the sailor saw the ship on the point of Anacapa and sailed over to investigate, after they had traced the wreck by debris which had come ashore on their island. They found it deserted, but filled with the finest sort of foods and wines and a great many other things.

They made several trips back and forth, appropriating what they wanted. My husband told me afterwards that one of the articles which he took off for his home on Santa Cruz was a large mirror. Finally, the vessel broke up and sank. The great eagle in the Lobero Theatre was taken from the vessel on which it was an ornament.⁴

After three years on Santa Cruz, he discovered that the island was not government property, but had been taken up. So he decided to leave it and go over to San Nicolas, which did belong to the

government, and where he would be undisturbed.

Right here let me tell you how the wild pigs which are now so plentiful and dangerous on Santa Cruz came to be there.

In my husband's early days on the island, pork was very scarce, and cost from 75 cents to one dollar per pound. So he imported some male and female pigs from San Francisco and turned them loose on Santa Cruz.

How the hogs came

When he was gathering up his stock and other belongings preparatory to moving to San Nicolas, he could not catch all the pigs, so left the wildest of them. As a result, they multiplied and throve and are the ancestors of those on the island today. There were no hogs on the island when Captain Kimberly moved there.

Many stories have been afloat as to how the hogs came to be brought to Santa Cruz, but this is the truth.⁵

Captain Kimberly stocked San Nicolas with sheep, and they increased very rapidly. The ewes had young twice a year and two were almost always born each

time. The flocks increased until they numbered 15,000 and our income from them was \$10,000 a year. Wool was very high.

Then came the dry year of 1864, which dealt Captain Kimberly a very hard blow. There was no rain at all, and many of the sheep died.

The frantic sheep

Another dry year, in 1869 or '70, turned San Nicolas into a desert and drove my husband out of the sheep business with heavy loss. In those days, San Nicolas was luxuriantly covered with vegetation, but the sheep, in their frantic efforts to get water, clipped off all that survived the dry, hot winds.

The wild carrot, with long, strong roots which went far down into the soil, had moisture at the bottom of them and the sheep dug two or three feet into the ground to get at the bottom of them. The winds blew sand completely over the island, burying the roots and the seeds that remained so deep that they were smothered and have made the island simply a waste of yellow sand.

I have been told by an experienced person that, if seed were sown on the west end during the rainy season, that the wind would carry it over the island and the moisture would cause it to germinate, thus re-clothing the island with verdure. He declares that the soil is good and productive.

Captain Kimberly saw that he would lose all his sheep unless he could get them off, so he chartered a large vessel and took the sheep, 1,000 at a time, to San Francis-



Above left: The ill-fated Winfield Scott.

Below left: The Lobero eagle, recently on display in the Historical Society Museum. Photo: William Dewey.

co, where he sold them to the butchers. The last 4,000 he could not get off and they remained on the island when he sold it to Mr. Hamilton, a San Francisco banker, in 1870 or '71.⁶

I must digress to tell you the story of the Hamilton family. They were very wealthy. There were two pretty and charming daughters. When I went back to San Francisco on visits after my marriage, I saw a great deal of them, and we went together to picnics in the Woodward Gardens. When I went down to the wharf to take ship back to Santa Barbara, I would find much fruit and many flowers in the cabin which they had thoughtfully sent down, and they would go with me to the wharf to say goodbye.

One of them married a young man of distinguished Southern family. In fact, his grandfather was governor of Maryland and he was well thought of in San Francisco. When Mr. Hamilton died, there was his large estate to settle up, and the widow and two girls gave this man power of attorney to attend to affairs.

Notoriety and scandal

He sold everything he could lay his hands on conveniently, at ridiculous prices, gathered together all the money he could find and fled. San Nicolas Island, which had been sold by Captain Kimberly to Mr. Hamilton for \$18,000, for instance, this man sold for \$6,000.

The fugitive was located afterwards in Kansas, but the Hamilton family refused to prosecute, because of the notoriety and scandal which would ensue. He had not beggared them, though he had reduced their fortune considerably.

The girl who had been his wife went to Del Monte sometime after with Mrs.

Phoebe Hearst, who was very fond of her. She secured a divorce, and while at Del Monte, met Lord Waterloo, Lord Mayor of London. He fell in love with her and they were married and went to England. The last I knew, she was still living in London. She was one of the late Queen Victoria's most intimate friends.

No hacks

I was married to Captain Kimberly in 1865 and came to Santa Barbara on the *Orizaba*. I was the only woman for this port on that trip and the whole town came down to the beach to welcome me. There was no large wharf then and we made a surf landing. A sailor carried me ashore. He must have been a very large, strong sailor, because he also carried my husband ashore through the surf and did not lose his footing.

I had never been in a town that there were not hacks to meet the steamers and I was quite humiliated when my husband loaded me into an express wagon to take me uptown. I asked him later why he did not have a hack to meet us, and he echoed in surprise, "Hack? There isn't such a thing in the place. The express wagon is the only vehicle we have for bringing people up from the beach."

He owned at that time the block on which we now live, bounded by Chapala, State, Mason and Yanonali streets, and our house was an adobe on State Street, near the upper side of the block. We did not go there, but stayed at the St. Charles Hotel.

The St. Charles was not in the location then to which it was afterwards removed and which has been referred to so often by other old residents, that is, on the site of the St. Charles Market, on the west side of the street, below De la Guerra, near where the Daily News is now, in



A "Spanish orchestra," perhaps similar to this one, welcomed home the California Regiment to Santa Barbara in 1866. The Unitarian Church is at right.

the building owned by the Oreñas at the present time.⁷

Mr. Tebbetts, the former owner of the *Santa Barbara Independent*, forerunner of the *Daily News*, conducted the hotel. When we prepared to leave San Francisco to come down here, my husband said, "The house is all complete and waiting for you, except for tidies for the chairs. We'll have to get them here."

Quite primitive

I found that it was complete and well-furnished. We had silverware for the table, and, to my surprise, I noted that at least in one wealthy home here, silverware was unknown. They had steel knives and iron forks. So you can see, it was quite primitive.

A few months after my arrival, the California Regiment, which had been sent first to Wilmington and then to the Mexican border in Arizona for service, came home by steamer from Los Angeles. It was a festive occasion.

I don't believe there was a woman in

Santa Barbara who owned a hat; they all wore a scarf over their heads. I noticed that in the parade.

A Spanish orchestra furnished music for the procession of the soldiers up from the wharf. It was led by one Pico, playing the violin. The women walked with them and this made it a rather irregular sort of parade.

Anyway, because of the condition of State Street, it would have been impossible to march with precision. The street was rough and crooked, uphill and down, guttered and gullied where the water ran down it and twisting around the little knolls and hillocks in its path.

I never dared to go out walking on the street alone, because one might meet a horseman dashing along at top speed, and as there were no sidewalks, the pedestrian was forced to take care of himself or herself. Sometimes the rider would be chasing a wild steer and the roping and throwing of the steer would take place while other traffic halted.

There were marks of the drought when I came here. The estero was white



The first service at the new Episcopal Church on Gutierrez Street was held on Christmas Day, 1868.

with the bones of the cattle which had come down to it, seeking in vain for water. The estero is now the slough, which penetrates along the east side of town a considerable distance up Milpas Street.

When I came up here there were no Protestant churches and in 1867 the first, the Congregational, was established. Shortly thereafter, the Episcopal bishop decided to establish a church in this district. It was within a few months and the

course of the Congregationalists in coming here doubtless decided him.

I am an Episcopalian and in order to raise funds for the church, which was to be located between State and Anacapa on Gutierrez Street, we, the few Americans who were here and of the Episcopal faith, decided to give a fair.

The fair was held in the Aguirre house on East Carrillo, on the site of the Little Town Club of today, and was a great success. Of course, the population was overwhelmingly Catholic, being Spanish and Californian, but they patronized us liberally and we cleared over \$600.

We couldn't have given the fair without the help of the Catholic girls who worked on the booths and the decorations and attended to the crowds who thronged the house during the fair. The house had no floor and we laid one in the patio for dancing. The booths were set back in the arches around the patio. One of the girls who worked hardest was Miss Thompson, a relative of Dixie Thompson. She has recently returned here. Her name is now Mrs. Tyng.

At that fair, the first ice cream ever seen in Santa Barbara was sold. It had

The site of the Episcopal fair was the Aguirre adobe in the first block of East Carrillo Street. Built around 1841, it was demolished in 1884 after years of neglect. Henry Chapman Ford etching is from the Santa Barbara Historical Society collection.



been a popular delicacy in San Francisco before I left there, and I brought with me when I came to Santa Barbara a servant who knew how to make it. I sent to San Francisco for the ice, which came in time, and she made up a large quantity of ice cream.

We sold it at 25 cents a dish. The women and girls would invest, take a spoonful of it, and then cry out in surprise and dismay, "Muy fria, muy fria!" (Very cold, very cold!) They would run away a little distance, but after a time, would come back again and taste more cautiously.

When their teeth had become accustomed to the cold, they ate the ice cream eagerly and some bought more.

Don't shoot!

I have been told my husband greatly resembled Jack Powers, the notorious outlaw, who terrorized California in the early days. Because of that resemblance, he came very near to losing his life. He was standing in the door of a house on Cañón Perdido Street in 1853 or 1854 and men outside in the darkness, knowing that Powers was in the vicinity, came to the conclusion that here he was, delivered into their hands.

They were taking aim when one in position to see a little better than the others cried out, "Don't shoot, it's Kimberly!"

For several years there was little law but the law of the strongest and one had to be prepared to defend himself. My husband came over from the island one time with a considerable sum of money to pay out to sheep shearers who had worked for him. He placed the money in the safe of Mr. First.

First had a store at Burton's Mound, lower Chapala and the Boulevard, and his was the only safe in town. When my

husband went to First's to get the money, he saw some strangers loitering about, but paid little attention to them. They must have kept him in sight, but not closely enough to realize that he had paid out all his money to the men he owed, before he started for Montecito to hire some other Californians that he needed.

There were very few houses in Montecito and the country between this little town and that district was covered with dense brush and live oak except for some trails through it. My husband was jogging along when he heard a furious clatter behind him and turned to see two of the strangers riding down on him at a gallop, swinging their lariats. They intended to rope him, drag him from his horse, kill and rob him.

Well, he put spur to the horse and dashed away at top speed. He lay flat in the saddle, his face down on the horse's neck, for two reasons: to keep from being brushed off by the overhanging limbs of the live oaks and to prevent their lariats settling upon him.

Repeatedly, the loops did fall on him, but because of his position, they could not take hold and he threw them off. By some miracle, he avoided the great limbs of the trees and won the race. As soon as the first house came in sight, the robbers turned about and galloped off.

Otter—get the guns!

I must tell you how my husband came to be a hunter of sea otter. He was out in a small boat with the old English sailor, when he first went to Santa Cruz, and noticed a strange animal swimming in the water. He inquired what it was.

"That's a sea otter," replied the sailor excitedly, "and his pelt is worth \$25. Let's go get the guns!"

The marks of a voyage from
 the Good Schooner "Esperanza"
 to the "Portland"

Spinning of the and scrapping
by 4.00 Red with cable, cane
that says weather to Southward

Tuesday, July 2nd 1872
Came on with moderate rain
rather strong, no stick at anchor
they set down much stuff and
took up a few. A regular wind. Saw
only two goats. Other during this days
hunt. At seven o'clock at anchor
and made sail at 8. The boat
was full and killed some other. At
12 the came to an anchor. At
1 1/2 we started again after dinner
- going. Other plentiful, but some
what scarce. The close ground
was found but (1) but making (13
thirty). Wind during all day
moderate from all points. Land
bearing E 1/2 N from anchorage.

Wednesday, July 31, 1872

to open up as with age, weather from S. to W. - summer, E. to S. - winter, S. to N. - spring. Once she can have a better view of the coast but I think too near - much of the coast is covered at some and has plenty of water. 10.00 am 1881. returned from (Feb. 12) (Mar. 1st) a much better view of the coast and a better view of the coast. The weather was not so good.

San Francisco to North Pacific Ocean.
Mr. Connelley, Master.

Thursday July 11/13.
Onwards with light and calm weather mostly clear. During the night fog. 6³⁰ am birds started off. Hunting returned at 12³⁰ p.m. Two good birds taken (11-12). After dinner large and one small I went to punning and catching. Saw some Hump-back whales. 2^{1/2} fathoms.

Friday. July 5/51/2.

Commence with fog, cloudy weather from South-east. We turned so during the night at 4 we could all sleep. At 6 AM. as I turned to turning care of ship at 2 AM. started for the shore but could not land on account of heavy surf on beach. Didn't the bottom and light thick fog. At anchor

Saturday, July 6, 1872

Commenced with thick fog,
cabin retained two sailers at 5.30
at 9.45 again boats started out for
sight and to procure firewood
retained at 4.45 p.m. in the morning
one boat and one atter 9. (thatched also
in the other boat and 2.30 p.m. 4.45 p.m. 8
down started out and 3.00 and

They returned hastily to camp for a rifle, then set out again to the place where they had seen the otter swimming. My husband had been brought up on an island in the Sound off Guilford, Connecticut, where his father was keeper of the light and custodian of the old Revolutionary fort which still stood there. He had done much fishing and hunting and was a very good shot.

In order to secure otter, it was necessary to be a good shot. At any alarm the otter would dive. The marksman would stand up in the swaying boat, his rifle ready. In a few seconds, the otter would bob up, take a look around and dive again if he saw anything alarming. The shot had to be quick and sure or the otter escaped.

Well, the first day they got three. The sailor showed my husband how to skin the carcasses and cure the pelts. The first season he secured more than 100 otter pelts and sold them to Mr. First, who kept the store and trading establishment.

Very profitable

That was the start of a very profitable occupation and for several years my husband hunted otter, first around the islands, and then, on dull seasons there, in the waters of Lower California. He had six boats, each with a complete crew of Californians for otter hunters. He trained these men himself and they became very good shots and skillful hunters.

Gradually, the otter became scarcer and scarcer and finally my husband resolved to go to the Sea of Okhotsk, off the shores of Siberia and northern Japan, for them. On the first cruise in his own vessel, he took \$22,000 worth of them in one month. The skins, when cured, were sold mostly in Russia, where they were in great demand among the wealthy.

He stayed home for five years after his first trip to Japan, which was in 1873, then went back in 1878 for the season again. His ship was lost at sea with all on board. Among those who perished with him was Joe Dover's brother, who was a very good rifleman.

Sea otter are now extinct, I understand.

Sea otter are now extinct, I understand. The price of skins went to \$300 and \$400 and recently I heard of a skin quoted at \$7,000.⁸

When Captain Kimberly came home after his first voyage and told me of his great success, it created a good deal of excitement here. David Ap Jones, who was a brother-in-law of Ramón Malo, who still lives here, and Dr. Brinkerhoff conceived the idea of going into the sea otter business, too, and Ap Jones went to Japan to get a concession for hunting. He was a friend of the American minister, De Long, and believed it would be easy. But for some reason, the Japanese refused the concession and he had to come home empty-handed.

Captain George Nidever the elder was otter hunting off the Channel Islands when my husband came to Santa Barbara and continued for many years thereafter at this occupation. Captain Nidever is made famous in one of Emerson's essays on society. In an article on *Courage*, a poem is incorporated, which was written by a woman whose name is not given by Emerson. The poem tells how Captain Nidever, when unarmed, met a bear in the Santa Barbara mountains. He looked the animal unflinchingly in the eye, and it turned and went away without attacking him.

I read with interest the story of John S. Bell in your "Fifty Years" column recently. I had been here but a short time when Mr. Bell and Mr. Jaques landed from the steamer, and that night I attended a reception given for them at the home of Dr. Shaw, next door to our place.

I have seen frequent mention of the old wharf at the foot of Chapala Street and someone referred to it as being owned by Captain Trussell. It was built by a party of the pioneer residents, who formed a very informal organization, each putting in some money. Among those who contributed were Dr. Shaw, Captain Kimberly, Captain Trussell, Dr. Brinkerhoff, Col. Heath and Charles Pierce. They built a warehouse, too.

There were some queer characters here in the early days. One was "Pedro Loco," Crazy Pete, who delighted in making his horse prance and buck on the narrow State Street, in order to frighten women and children who might be passing.

Pedro Loco played a part in a little comedy with my husband, which I think amused Captain Kimberly more than it annoyed him. We had a pair of white horses for our carriage and they were pastured in the large lot about our house.

Every few months, the horses would disappear. After a day or two, Pedro would loiter by and my husband would say, "Pedro, my horses have gotten lost and I don't know where they are. Do you think you could find them? I'll give you five dollars if you do."

"I'll try to find them, Captain," Pedro would reply, eagerly. Sure enough, in a few hours he would be back with the horses, would pocket his five dollars and ride off.

One time, when my husband was away, our coachman, who was in the carriage waiting for my mother and me to come out and take a drive, entered the house and said, "Pedro Loco wants four bits."

My husband had always warned me never to give Pedro any money, because there would be no end to his demands after that. When I came out, I told him I had no money for him.

Then he said, "If you don't give me money, I will ride alongside your carriage all the way up State Street, calling you bad names in Spanish."

I remained firm and we started on the drive. True to his word, Pedro kept his horse at our pace, shouting a continuous stream of Spanish which, fortunately, I did not understand.

Through a cloud on the title, we lost our property for 17 years while litigation was going on. In that time, we lived in various places about the city and vicinity. During five or six years of that time, I conducted the Sulphur Hot Springs resort in Montecito.⁹

Finally, the litigation was decided in our favor and we moved back into the old adobe on State Street.

Along came Pedro Loco. He made extravagant protestations in Spanish for my late husband, "El Capitán," and told



how delighted he was that we had our home again.

"I have come," he wound up, "to rejoice with you. I am going to spend the whole day with you."

There was a grass plot and a tree in front of the house. He unsaddled the horse so that it might graze in comfort and made himself a place to lie down under the trees. And there he stayed all day. We brought him out his dinner and he ate it there alone.

At five o'clock, he saddled up again, saluted us with flourishes of his large hat, mounted and rode away.

Prices would soar

I suppose you know that 20 years ago, the Southern Pacific went out of the city to the north and west on Gutierrez Street. There were many curves and some bad accidents happened. The Southern Pacific decided to straighten its lines and, about 18 years ago, sent two men here who stayed at the Potter, then newly built.

They kept secret who they represented and made persistent attempts to buy my property. Of course, they had to work carefully, because they knew that if the news got out before they had all the options, the prices of property would soar out of sight.

I refused to treat with them, though they kept coming every day for months. Finally, a rumor came to us of the proposed railroad change. We had decided that there would be plenty of business down this way with the coming of the Potter Hotel and were building three stores on State Street, at the upper corner of our property, during the latter part of the negotiations.

When the railroad rumor came to me, I knew that they could condemn the land

and I said to them, "If you represent the railroad, I will talk business."

They bound me to secrecy and gave me a very good price. They told appreciatively how they had watched those stores go up and how they had to wire San Francisco each night of the progress which we were making.

In the settlement, they paid us for every nail driven into the stores and for every hour the carpenters spent upon it.

The neighbors were very curious when we began taking down the stores. We moved the lumber over here and built this apartment house, where I now live, at 104 Chapala. When the options were all secured, the people gave me credit for being very shrewd and starting the erection of the stores on purpose to make the company pay more. But I am not entitled to the credit or discredit of such shrewdness, because I knew nothing of the railroad's proposed change of route until a day or so before I sold.

When the tracks were straightened, they ran over the site of our old house, which, of course, had been torn down.

Editor's Notes

1. Merritt probably served on the second Committee of Vigilance, formed in 1856. In combating crime in San Francisco, the Committee made arrests, established its own tribunal system and carried out its own, at times, capital, punishments.

2. At this time, the island was owned by Andrés Castillero, who had received the grant from the Mexican governor of California in 1839. He sold the island to William E. Barron in 1857.

3. The *Winfield Scott* went aground at Anacapa Island in December, 1853.

4. There is some question whether

the eagle came from the *Winfield Scott* or from the *Yankee Blade*, which sank off Point Arguello in September, 1854. For the *Yankee Blade* account, see Walker Tompkins' book, *It Happened in Old Santa Barbara*.

5. The whole story of the introduction of pigs to Santa Cruz Island may never be known. It is generally thought that James Box began raising pigs there in the early 1850's. One story has Box selling the pigs and leaving the island in 1853. Another relates how Thomas More sued Box for repayment of a loan and sent Captain Kimberly to Santa Cruz to retrieve the pigs as partial repayment. Kimberly rounded up a small number, but found the rest too wild to be worthwhile to catch. That Kimberly himself originally brought the pigs to the island seems doubtful.

6. Captain Kimberly filed a claim for 160 acres on San Nicolas Island in 1858,

although he had been on the island for some years before that, probably since 1856. He sold his holdings in 1870 to William Hamilton and Abraham Halsey.

7. The building that housed the St. Charles Hotel was never moved. It was built by Alpheus Thompson in 1834-36 in what is now the Picadilly Square retail complex in the 800 block of State Street. The St. Charles Market was located here in the early 1900's. The adobe was torn down in 1913. The Daily News was located at 720 State Street in 1922, moving to De la Guerra Plaza in 1923.

8. With the otter on the verge of extinction, the U.S., Russia, Japan and Great Britain signed the International Fur Treaty in 1911, which forbade killing otters at sea. The otter population made a comeback and now numbers in the thousands.

9. Mrs. Kimberly ran the Hot Springs resort on and off during the late 1800's.



After her husband's death, Mrs. Kimberly engaged in a number of enterprises to support her family. Here she is pictured in 1884 with her boarders at the White House, corner of Chapala and Haley. Mrs. Kimberly is behind and slightly to the right of the little boy.

The Santa Barbara Historical Society Flag

By Carey Stanton as told to Marla Daily

Dr. Stanton, a former trustee of the Historical Society, made his home on Santa Cruz Island from 1957 until his death in 1987. Marla Daily is president of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation and is author of the book, California's Channel Islands.

MARLA DAILY: Dr. Stanton, yesterday, July 18, 1987, the Historical Society conducted a trip to your ranch on Santa Cruz Island. At that time, you presented to them a newly designed flag. How did you come to this idea of a flag for the Historical Society?

DR. STANTON: I am a relatively new trustee at the Society and it came to my attention that we did not have a flag. Now the general concept in Santa Barbara is to emphasize the Hispanic aspect of its history. This is true in flags where you see a lot of influence from Castile in Spain and from Mexico. My idea was to go even farther back than that, to the story of Saint Barbara, from whom the town got its name.

Now, Saint Barbara had nothing to do with Spain or Mexico. She was born in Nicodemia in Asia Minor in 218 A.D. She was a great beauty and her father, a Roman officer, built a tower for her, where she could receive suitors under proper conditions. Barbara insisted on having three windows in the tower. When her father asked why that particular number, she admitted that the windows represented the Holy Trinity. Her pagan father denounced her to the Romans and then, in his rage, cut her down with his sword. He was then himself cut down by a lightning bolt. She thus came to be known as the patron saint of miners,



The Society flag on Santa Cruz. It now flies daily above the Covarrubias adobe.

masons, gunners, etc., and as a protection against lightning.

Although not an official saint of the Catholic Church, Santa Barbara is named after her. So I went to Paul Mills, who is a well-known vexillologist in Santa Barbara and former director of the Museum of Art. He thought the idea of a Society flag wonderful. We decided to do a very simple, stylized flag. In the center of the flag is the tower, with the three windows showing at the top. At the top and bottom of the flag are jagged bolts of lightning, colored white, to signify her virginity. The background is red, the color of martyrdom. That is the extent of the flag I gave to the Historical Society.

Justin Ruhge's latest book is *Gunpowder and Canvas: The History of Maritime Influence on the Central Coast of California*. Heavily illustrated, it covers the period 1542-1850 and includes new material on the Goleta cannons.

Russell A. Ruiz Richard S. Whitehead

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of two very prominent members of the Santa Barbara history community, Russell A. Ruiz and Richard S. Whitehead.

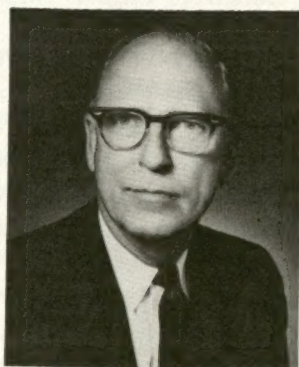
Russell Ruiz was a direct descendant of Felipe de Goycochea, a *comandante* of the Santa Barbara Presidio. After a distinguished career in the Navy, he devoted his



Russell A. Ruiz

energies to the study of local history. A life member of the Historical Society and an honorary life trustee of the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, he worked for some 30 years toward the restoration of the Presidio. His pen and ink drawings of early Santa Barbara history graced the pages of numerous books and the newspaper. The California Historical Society recognized his many contributions to historical study with a special award of merit.

Richard Whitehead was Santa Barbara County planning director from 1949 to 1969. He was First Vice President of the Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library and his collection of materials on early Cal-



Richard S. Whitehead

ifornia and Santa Barbara history forms the core of the new research library at the Trust for Historic Preservation. His accomplishments as writer, researcher and librarian were noted by the Archive Library and the Trust when they made him an honorary life trustee. He was active in a number of historical and research organizations throughout California.

Santa Barbara has lost two great benefactors and friends with their passing. Their devotion and talents are missed.

Ruiz photo by Ray Borges; Whitehead photo courtesy of Trust for Historic Preservation.

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